

would include any CRM system that handles and queues inbound communications from multiple sources. In such embodiments, these systems may then integrate and enhance these servers with universal queuing and universal agents.

[0031] It should be noted that the embodiment of FIG. 2 is exemplary. Alternative embodiments may comprise any number and combination of central status devices 202 and servers 214-220. For example, the system may comprise only a communication management server 220 that receives and routes the inbound communication while creating an information record.

[0032] In some embodiments, the voice call, e-mail message, and/or the chat message may be forwarded to the mobile device 212. If other communication types are enabled to be received by the call center 102, then corresponding communication servers are provided in the call center 102 for receiving and forwarding the communication to the appropriate agent communication device 204.

[0033] Referring now to FIG. 3, the exemplary central status device 202 is shown in more detail. In various embodiments, the central status device 202 comprises a processor 302, one or more communication interfaces 304, and at least one storage device 306. In exemplary embodiments, the central status device 202 is configured to maintain the status and profiles of every agent 104 on every agent communication device 204 of the call center 102. In further embodiments, the central status device 202 may also be configured to determine the agent 104 to which an inbound communication should be directed to as will be described below.

[0034] In exemplary embodiments, the communication interfaces 304 are configured to allow the central status device 202 to communicate with the various communication servers (e.g., servers 214, 216, and 218) and the agent communication devices 204.

[0035] The exemplary storage device 306 may comprise a communication module 308, a status module 310, a profile module 312, a match module 314, an universal login module 316, and databases 318. In some embodiments, the various components of the storage device 306 may be located in a plurality of different storage devices 306. In other embodiments, one or more of the storage devices 306 may be located outside of the central status device 202, but be coupled thereto. It should be noted that the storage device 306 is exemplary, and that alternative embodiments may comprise more, fewer, or functionally equivalent components and still be within the scope of exemplary embodiments. For example, the communication module 308 and the universal login module 316 may be optional. Alternatively, the match module 314 and one or more of the databases 318 may be located at the communication servers or agent communication devices 204.

[0036] In exemplary embodiments, the databases 318 comprise a profile database 320 and an optional status database 322. Alternative embodiments may comprise other databases or store the profile database 320 and/or status database 322 in another device or location. The profile database 320 and status database 322 will be discussed in more details below.

[0037] The communication module 308 is configured to determine the inbound communication type. For example, if the PBX server 214 forwards a request for an available agent 104, the communication module 308 will determine that the inbound communication is a voice call via POTS. This determination may be utilized by the match module 314, as will be described below.

[0038] The status module 310 is configured to maintain and update communication status for every agent 104 on every agent communication device 204 for every communication type. In some embodiments, the status module 310 will receive periodic status updates from the agent communication devices 204 and/or the communication servers. In other embodiments, the status module 310 will request a status from each agent communication device 204 and/or communication server. The current communication status(es) may then be stored in the status database 322. Alternatively, the status may be determined in real-time by the status module 310, and need not be stored in a status database 322. As such, the status module 310 enables determination of the availability of the agents 104 to receive inbound communications.

[0039] The exemplary profile module 312 is configured to maintain profile information and to review the profile information stored in the profile database 320 when an inbound communication needs to be directed to an agent 104. As such, the exemplary profile module 312 may determine applicability of forwarding an inbound communication to an agent 104.

[0040] In exemplary embodiments, the profiles provide rules for distribution of inbound communication to an applicable agent 104. These rules may comprise, for example, types of communication devices associated with the agent 104, combinations of inbound communication numbers and types an agent 104 may handle concurrently, levels of accessibility, emergency overrides, and agent preferences.

[0041] In various embodiments, a particular group of agents 104 (e.g., sales agents) may be organized into different levels. As such, a level of accessibility may be assigned to each agent 104 in this group such that, for example, a general call will be directed to a level one agent 104, while a more complex call regarding a specific account may be directed to a level two agent 104, and a "gold member" may access a level three agent 104. The level three agent 104 may provide more services and/or expertise to the gold member, for example.

[0042] In some embodiments, an emergency override rule may be provided in the profile. This emergency override rule allows, for example, the agent 104 to interrupt another agent's handling of an inbound communication. The emergency override rule may also allow an agent 104, in special circumstances, to handle a plurality of inbound communications and/or combinations of inbound communications concurrently, which the agent 104 normally does not handle.

[0043] In various embodiments, one or more profiles may be created and associated with each agent 104. In some embodiments, a group profile may be created which applies to all agents 104 within the group. For example, a sales support group may have a group profile that differs from the group profile of a technical support group.

[0044] In some embodiments, an individual profile may be created for the agent 104. The individual profile may be created via the profile module 312 and stored in the profile database 320. These individual profiles will be specific and tailored to each agent 104. For example, a more experienced agent 104 may have a profile that allows the agent 104 to handle a plurality of inbound communications at the same time. The profile for this agent 104 may indicate the types, numbers, and combinations of types and numbers of inbound communications that is allowed to be handled concurrently. For example, the agent 104 may be allowed to handle two chat sessions and one e-mail or handle one or more chat sessions but no voice calls concurrently. Any combination of inbound